



## **INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

### **RATIONAL/INTRODUCTION:**

St David's N.S. recognises that in individual circumstances a pupil may need assistance with intimate care. Intimate care is any caring procedure which involves attending to a student when they are undressed or partially undressed. This could include washing (including intimate parts), helping to use the toilet, changing nappies or carrying out a procedure that requires direct or indirect contact with an intimate area of a student. The supervision of a student while they are dressing or undressing will also be considered intimate care.

This policy and related procedures have been developed bearing in mind that all physical contact between staff and students:

- should be aimed at meeting the needs of the student;
- should respect the dignity of each student;
- should be consistent with professional integrity of staff members.

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times.

This policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

### **CHILD FOCUSED PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE:**

The following fundamental principles upon which this policy are based:

- every child has the right to be safe;
- every child has the right to personal privacy;
- every child has the right to be valued as an individual;
- every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible;

- every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their ability;
- all members of staff have the right to be protected and have their needs also met in the provision of the intimate care of pupils for whom they care.

#### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure that the dignity and privacy of the student involved is paramount;
- to develop a framework of procedures whereby intimate care requirements are dealt with in an appropriate manner.

#### **STAFF:**

##### **Toileting accidents**

In the event of a toileting accident, clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in school for pupils to avail of. Due to the higher risk of toileting accidents in the Junior and Senior Infant classroom, these pupils are requested to keep a change of clothes in their school bag, to be used when and if necessary.

Teachers may provide assistance to pupils in the form of standing outside the toilet door and verbally guiding and reassuring the pupil as they dress themselves. If intimate care is required by the pupil, a second adult will need to be present.

##### **Nappy changing**

Where applicable, nappies may be changed for a pupil. 2 members of staff must be present at all times, primarily SNAs, however, teachers may support if necessary. In so far as possible, only permanent or long-term staff should be involved in intimate care and substitute teachers should not be involved unless authorised by the principal.

A child may be changed on a changing mat in the stall of the bathroom in the special classroom. One staff member will complete the nappy change while the other staff member will stand at the open door, offering support and ensuring the privacy of the child being changed.

### **PARENTAL/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Parents are responsible for supplying the school with the resources required to carry out the intimate care of the child, which may include but is not limited to:

- nappies
- wipes
- creams
- nappy sacks
- spare underwear
- spare clothes

Parents are responsible for making staff aware of:

- cultural/religious sensitivities;
- additional equipment required;
- specific care need;
- child's preferred means of communication, to include agreed terminology for body parts and bodily functions;
- child's level of ability.

### **ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR STAFF:**

While it is not possible to prescribe guidelines that will apply in all situations, it is important the elements of good practice are followed:

- all relevant staff should be familiar with the policy;
- address the student by name and ensure they are aware of the focus of the activity;
- verbalise your actions to the student in a reassuring way to prepare them for each procedure;
- use visual cues for students who are preverbal or with limited communication;
- use appropriate and professional language;
- respect the dignity and privacy of the student at all times;
- have all equipment and materials to hand before commencing;
- use discreet observation if checking to see if nappy needs changing;
- use protective gloves provided;
- take all precautions when disposing of soiled material in the bin provided;

- the students' independence will be encouraged

**REPORTING:**

All toileting accidents involving unidentified students must be reported to the parents.

**SWIMMING:**

Pupils will be expected to dress/undress themselves for swimming lessons. This will occur in either group or individual changing areas, as provided by the swimming pool. Staff members will wait outside the changing area and verbally encourage and assist children in getting dressed/undressed.

Where assistance is needed, with an individual pupil, agreed by the principal, two members of staff, primarily SNAs will dress/undress the child in a private cubicle in a respectful and dignified manner.

Under no circumstances will a staff member be alone with a child to dress/undress them.

**STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

All teachers and SNAs assume shared responsibility, participation in and contribution towards the implementation and effectiveness of the Intimate Care Policy

**TIMEFRAME FOR REVIEW:**

This policy will be reviewed and updated in three years or sooner, if necessary.

**RATIFICATION:**

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16/4/24.

Signed:  Date: 16/4/24  
Chairperson

Signed:  Date: 16/4/24  
Principal